



Call for papers for HSR Theme Issue:

Improving Efficiency and Value in Health Care

Sponsored by Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

Health Services Research (HSR) is pleased to announce a new feature whereby excellent and ground-breaking health services research will be gathered around an important ‘theme’ and published in a theme issue of the journal. The first theme chosen to introduce this feature is “Improving Efficiency and Value in Health Care,” in which we seek to publish research that will help improve the value and efficiency of the American Healthcare System. This Theme Issue is sponsored by Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), which will assist *HSR* in publicizing and disseminating the findings of the selected studies.

This theme is particularly fitting to initiate this new feature because it presents a conundrum for researchers and policy makers alike. *HSR* aims to attract the best research on this theme in time to contribute to the national debate and collective interest about health care that attends election years. We all recognize that high and rising healthcare costs - especially when accompanied by gaps in quality, safety, equity, and access – are unsustainable. Federal and state policy makers, along with private payers and systems leaders, are seeking new ways to reduce waste, increase efficiency of healthcare delivery, and allocate resources in order to improve value in health care. Consumers also seek guidance about how to maximize the value of their own health care dollar, particularly since some payer innovations have increased consumers’ financial exposure. *HSR* is interested in publishing the best research that addresses these critical issues.

We are soliciting the following types of submissions:

* **Research Papers** presenting the results of original research that can inform efforts to improve efficiency and value. Possible areas of focus include increasing efficiency at the provider or system level (e.g., through process improvements, substitution of more cost-effective technologies, benefit plan redesign, or improved incentives or organizational arrangements), and improving the functioning of health care markets (for example through increased competition or greater price and quality transparency).

* **Research Methods Papers** reporting methodological advances that improve the reliability and utility of research on efficiency and value for public and private policy-makers, payers, and consumers.

* **Evaluations or Policy Analyses** using rigorous methods to evaluate the results of pilot programs, demonstrations, or other large-scale initiatives (e.g., public reporting, provider

or consumer incentives, regional or national voluntary ‘campaigns’, etc.) designed to improve efficiency and value.

The deadline for initial submission of manuscripts is August 21st, 2007. Criteria for selection of manuscripts include: (1) quality, rigor, and originality; (2) significance and usefulness for improving efficiency and value; and (3) clarity of writing and presentation. For this theme issue, *HSR* will welcome research using AHRQ datasets such as the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) and the Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUP). However, manuscripts that use other data and manuscripts reporting qualitative research are also welcome and encouraged.

Manuscripts submitted for the Theme Issue will undergo the same *HSR* peer review process as all regular manuscripts and will be evaluated using *HSR*’s usual high standards for publication. Manuscripts that are accepted at *HSR* typically undergo several cycles of revisions. However, due to the timeline for publishing the Theme Issue, *HSR* will monitor their progress through review cycles and authors should expect to be especially timely in returning revisions for these manuscripts. All manuscripts must follow the "Instructions for Authors," http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/societyimages/hsr/HSR%20Instructions_2007.pdf.

As is usual for all regular manuscripts accepted at *HSR*, all accepted articles will first be published electronically using *HSR*’s OnlineEarly publication. Articles published through OnlineEarly are fully published and may be cited. At this stage, accepted articles will undergo an additional selection process and approximately 8 to 10 articles will be selected for the Theme Issue, based on the most original and significant work addressing the theme. Accepted manuscripts that are not selected for the Theme Issue will be automatically scheduled for print publication in a regular issue and their place in the queue will be determined solely on date of acceptance, as for regular manuscripts.

The anticipated publication date *in print* for the Theme Issue is October 2008.

Key dates for authors:

August 21, 2007: Initial submission of manuscripts for the Theme Issue.

June 10, 2008: Notification of assignment of accepted manuscripts to the Theme Issue or Regular Issue.

October 2008: Print Publication Date for Theme Issue.

Note: For individual manuscripts, electronic publication in OnlineEarly will occur within 2 months of their initial acceptance at *HSR*. Manuscripts not selected for the Theme Issue will be put in the same queue for print publication as all other regular manuscripts, based on their acceptance date.